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PATENT

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

APPLICANTS: Bloomquist *et al.*

SERIAL NUMBER: Not yet assigned ART UNIT: Not yet assigned

FILING DATE: Herewith EXAMINER: Not yet assigned

TITLE: METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR MODIFYING RASTER DATA

Box Patent Application
Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

This paper is a Preliminary Amendment for the application identified above, which is a continuation of, and incorporates by reference, U.S.S.N. 09/089,861 filed on June 3, 1998, which claims priority to provisional application Serial No. 60/048,603 filed on June 4, 1997. Before beginning examination of the application, please amend the application, as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

On page 1, after the title, "Method And Apparatus For Modifying Raster Data," please insert the following:

-- Related Applications--

On page 1, line 2, after "This application," please insert the following:

-- is a continuation of U.S. Non-Provisional Patent Application Number 09/089,861, filed on June 3, 1998, which --

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel pending claims 22-26, without prejudice.

Please amend pending claims 1, 10, and 20, as follows:

1. (Amended) An imaging method for combining first raster data and second raster data, comprising the steps of:

receiving at a print drive from at least one raster image processor the first raster data of a first image processed by the at least one raster image processor, the print drive comprising a job control system for receiving, storing, digitally combining, and initiating output of raster data, and a user interface for directing operation of the job control system by a system operator;

receiving the second raster data of a second image processed by [said] the at least one raster image processor;

facilitating selection of the first raster data and the second raster data via the user interface; and

digitally combining by the print drive in response to direction received via the user interface the first raster data and the second raster data to form combined raster data representing a resultant image.

10. (Amended) A print drive for controlling operations in a prepress printing system having at least one raster image processor, the print drive comprising:

a print drive input terminal receiving, from the at least one raster image processor, first raster data of a first image and second raster data of a second image; [and]

a job control system for receiving, storing, digitally combining, and initiating output of raster data; and

a user interface for facilitating direction of the print drive job control system by a system operator;

wherein the job control system comprises a digital image combiner electrically coupled to the print drive input terminal, the digital image combiner in response to direction received via the user interface digitally combining the first raster data and the second raster data to form combined raster data representing a resultant image.

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20. (Amended) A [prepress] imaging system for digital doubleburning [or digital masking], comprising:

an image acquisition device for acquiring a first image and a second image;

at least one raster image processor, in electrical communication with the image acquisition device, for processing the first image to create first raster data and for processing the second image to create second raster data; and

a print drive, comprising:

a print drive input terminal receiving, from the at least one raster image processor, first raster data of a first image and second raster data of a second image;

a job control system for receiving, storing, digitally combining, and initiating output of raster data;

a user interface for facilitating direction of the print drive job control system by a system operator;

wherein the job control system comprises a digital image combiner in communication with the print drive input terminal, the digital image combiner in response to direction received via the user interface [in electrical communication with said at least one raster image processor, the print driver] digitally combining the first raster data and the second raster data to form combined raster data representing a resultant image.

Please add the following new claims 27-34:

27. The print drive of claim 14, wherein the print drive output comprises a network interface.

28. A prepress imaging system comprising the print drive of claim 14 and an output device in communication with said print drive output, the output device for imaging the combined raster data.

29. The prepress imaging system of claim 28, where in the output device comprises a platesetter for imaging the combined raster data onto a printing plate.

30. The prepress imaging system of claim 28, where in the output device comprises a imagesetter for imaging the combined raster data onto a medium.

31. The prepress imaging system of claim 28, further comprising a raster image processor in communication with the print drive input terminal, said raster image processor for interpreting a page description language.

32. The prepress imaging system of claim 31, further comprising a front end comprising a general purpose computer in communication with the raster image processor for providing page description language files to the raster image processor.

33. The prepress imaging system of claim 31, further comprising an image server in communication with the raster image processor, the image server for storing image files for processing by a raster image processor.

34. The prepress imaging system of claim 33, further comprising a front end comprising a general purpose computer in communication with said raster image processor for providing page description language files to said image server.

REMARKS

This Preliminary Amendment is being submitted to claim the Applicants' invention within the allowable scope of the prior art. Claims 1-16, 18-21 and 27-34 are now pending in this application. No new matter is being introduced by the present amendment. Applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment prior to examination of the application on the merits.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorney would be helpful, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' attorney at the number below. Please direct all correspondence to:

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Respectfully submitted,



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**MARKED-UP COPY OF CLAIMS 1, 10, AND 26
AS AMENDED**

1. (Amended) An imaging method for combining first raster data and second raster data, comprising the steps of:

receiving at a print drive from at least one raster image processor the first raster data of a first image processed by the at least one raster image processor, the print drive comprising a job control system for receiving, storing, digitally combining, and initiating output of raster data, and a user interface for directing operation of the job control system by a system operator;

receiving the second raster data of a second image processed by [said] the at least one raster image processor;

facilitating selection of the first raster data and the second raster data via the user interface; and

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a job control system for receiving, storing, digitally combining, and initiating output of raster data; and

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wherein the job control system comprises a digital image combiner electrically coupled to the print drive input terminal, the digital image combiner in response to direction received via the user interface digitally combining the first raster data and the second raster data to form combined raster data representing a resultant image.

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a print drive, comprising:

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a job control system for receiving, storing, digitally combining, and initiating output of raster data;

a user interface for facilitating direction of the print drive job control system by a system operator;

wherein the job control system comprises a digital image combiner in communication with the print drive input terminal, the digital image combiner in response to direction received via the user interface [in electrical communication with said at least one raster image processor, the print driver] digitally combining the first raster data and the second raster data to form combined raster data representing a resultant image.